

LOTS OF PLAYS ARE TORPEDOED WITHOUT WARNING, TOO

Defence of Marriage Against the Playwright

Some of the Reasons Why the Justly Famous Institution Is Not Quite the Thing Authors Would Have Us Believe.

By HEYWOOD BROWN.

When a play ends with a man and a woman in each other's arms we are expected to believe that they will live happily ever after, but when a play begins with a man and a woman on opposite sides of a breakfast table we know that they will not.

Marriage, which supplies the theatre with its happy endings, is broad enough to furnish the unhappy ones as well. Somehow or other the stage can see no middle ground in this ever so prevalent institution. It is marriage or the hope of it which sends the handsome hero out to win the Battle of the Marne, and it is marriage which sets the bank cashier to stealing money to lose in Wall Street.

On one night the author of a comedy asks us to regard the relationship of husband and wife as the most beautiful and the most sacred thing in the world, while on the following evening the farce writer insists that we shall giggle at the very notion that anybody takes matrimony seriously.

Somehow or other, people go on getting married in spite of the efforts of the playwrights to laugh them out of the fancy or to overawe them by the profundity of the business. It is no concern of ours, but we believe it would be a service to art if marriage were pictured a little more rationally. After all, it is just another of those things. Perhaps it never does turn out quite as well as anybody thinks it will. Certainly it is not up to the expectations of the playwright when he brings his curtain down with a "I love you" and a "I love you." But, on the other hand, there are a number of couples who blunder along somehow or other without recourse to pistols or poison.

Whatever its faults, the institution of marriage works well enough to deserve justice at the hands of the playwright. It does not get it. On the stage of France marriage is expressed in terms of farce by slamming doors, or in terms of serious drama by a scene in which a woman is dragged into a bedroom. Yet, at that, it fares much worse than in England. It takes Sir Henry Arthur Jones to write those scenes in which the old friend of the family sweeps away marital unhappiness by advising the husband to "take her out and buy her a good dinner."

You may have whatever moment of "Peter Pan" you like, but for us the finest passage in the play occurs in the fourth act, on board the pirate ship. It is that moment when Wendy exclaims to Michael Nicholas Darling, who is on the point of dispatching a pirate, "Isn't this terrible?" and he, the smallest of the Darlings, replies, as he wipes the blood from his cutlass, "I like it. I like it very much."

There is certainly more than one way to play any given character. At the least, a part may be played actively in two distinct manners, and in some cases there might be as many as ten adequate interpretations. We have specifically in mind the performance of R. P. Carter as Captain Hook in "Peter Pan." We are told that the Hook of Ernest Lawford was something entirely different, but, for all of that, the performance of Carter is a delightful one.

Mr. Harris said in his instructions to the actors in "Peter Pan": "The actors in a fairy play should feel that it was written by a child in all earnestness, and that they are children playing it in the same spirit."

Tragically Mr. Harris meant that. If so Carter has had the courage to disregard the instruction. His Hook is consciously a burlesque. Even a child, we think, would realize that the bark of this pirate was ever so much worse than his bite. It is a decidedly amusing performance. Ernest Lawford, we understand, was quite sinister as Hook. We don't think we should like this quite so well as we are almost certain that children would not have Hook too terrible. It would be no fun to see such a figure in your dreams at night if you could not feel that down at heel he was a more or less honest fellow.

The stage in recent years has almost abandoned plays about newspapers. Fortunately the movies have taken up the work of letting the great public know the life that is lived by journalists, newspapermen and society editors. The latest newspaper film is happily named "The Power of Publicity." The sketch of its plot which has been sent to us is as follows:

"Edna Morris, the daughter of a banker, is left penniless when her father dies from the shock upon learning that his cashier has decamped with the bank's funds. She secures a position as assistant to Velma Tolliver, editor of the woman's page on the 'News', and whose brother is owner and editor of the paper. One night Edna, dressed as a boy, hides in a room and overhears the conversation of some political crooks. She is discovered, but manages to escape with her 'scop'. Tolliver, the editor, admires her courage and asks her to become his boss for life."

It is a strange to us that such a commonplace little story should be made into a play. Things like that happen in our office almost every day.

A good title means ever so much. It was only the other day that a man fairly ran into the lobby of the Thirtieth Street Theatre and, waving a \$10 bill at the box office man, exclaimed, "Give me five tickets for the 'Unfastened Woman.'"

According to theatrical geometry when the third side of the triangle is removed, there remain two parallel lines which never meet.



MISS JANE COWL IN "COMMON CLAY."

THIS IS ONE OF TANNEN'S.

Julius Tannen, of "Abe and Mawruss," is telling a new one about a hard-of-hearing vaudeville actor. The actor, says Tannen, strolled into an agent's office one day to inquire about booking for himself and partner.

"Got anything for us next week?" he asked.

"Well," said the agent, "I can send you up to Connecticut, but it isn't very good."

"What's that?"

"I say—raising his voice—"that I can give you a week if you're not particular about the money."

"Well, we've got to work, you know. How much is it?"

"Sixty for the week."

"How much?"

"SIXTY a week."

A pause.

"All right; I'll take it. Fifty's better than nothing."

PLAYS OF THE WEEK

"Cock o' the Walk" at the Cohan Theatre.

Otis Skinner is always welcome. Tomorrow night he will return to New York in a new Henry Arthur Jones comedy—a double event—and he will incidentally bring the Cohan Theatre back to the legitimate, thus tripling the importance of the occasion.

Good reports have come from the road concerning "Cock o' the Walk." Of course, good reports nearly always come from the road, but one thing is certain. Henry Arthur Jones has taken Mr. Skinner's measure and fitted him with a tailor made part. As an old actor, Mr. Skinner will have an opportunity to boast and to brag and to swagger about—and perhaps even to recall pleasant memories of "The Honor of the Family."

In addition to the play, Mr. Skinner will be presenting a medium-sized comedy by Mr. Jones to remind the world of the immensity of the Shakespearean centenary. It is a satire on the English stage of to-day, and is said to direct many of its shafts at the modern actor-manager. The play has not yet had a London production, but that event is being looked forward to with interest.

The piece is in four acts, with scenes laid in London, in and about the Berkeley Theatre. The final act is supposed to occur next April, on the 50th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth.

In Mr. Skinner's support will be Vernon Steel, Walter F. Scott, Walter Gibbs, Frederick M. Conklin, Kenyon Nugrave, John Rogers, Harry Dodd, John Gibbs, Reginald Barlow, Ernest A. Elton, Harry Scarborough, Richard Webster, Janet Dunbar, Enid Bennett and Rita Otway.

"The Devil's Garden" at the Harris.

"The Devil's Garden," which has excited considerable advance interest, will be produced at the Harris Theatre Tuesday night. It is a woman, singularly enough, who has dramatized this unusually masculine novel. Edith Ellis, who has won considerable reputation as a playwright, is the dramatist. The novel, if any memories require refreshing, was by William B. Maxwell.

In addition to an unusual play, something out of the ordinary is promised from a scenic standpoint. The scenery has been designed by Robert E. Jones. Arthur Hopkins is responsible for the production, and the Messrs. Selwyn are at least mildly interested.

The principal role will be in the hands of Lyn Harding, who will be remembered as the hero of Bennett's "Great Adventure" and as Bill Sikes in an "Oliver Twist" revival a few years ago. Recently he has been touring Sengalli to Phyllis Neilson-Terry's "Tribly."

Others in the cast will be Lillian Albertson, Geraldine O'Brien, Charles W. Butler, Alice Augrade Butler, Rhoda Beresford, Albert Tavernier, William Devereaux, Eric Snowden, Rule Pratt, J. Palmer Collins, Fredrick Annerley, Emmett Bradley and Gladys Bradley.

BURTON HOLMES.

Burton Holmes will reach the climax of his Candler Theatre series to-night with his lecture on the Panama-Pacific Exposition. This lecture has been Mr. Holmes' most popular offering in other cities, replacing his talk on the Panama Canal. There will be no Monday matinee.

Mr. Holmes will begin his winter series at Carnegie Hall on January 16, and will be heard there for five Sunday evenings. His topics will be "Florida," "Down in Dixie," "The Grand Canyon," "The Panama-Pacific Exposition," "California" and the San Diego Exposition. The Monday matinees will be given at the Candler.



Cleo Mayfield in "The Blue Paradise," Casino.

Margaret Anglin in "Beverly's Balance," Standard.

Gladys Hanson in "The Ware Case," Maxine Elliott.



Lyn Harding and Geraldine O'Brien in "The Devil's Garden," Harris.

Dolly Sisters, Rozika and Yansci Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic New Amsterdam Roof



Otis Skinner in "Cock o' the Walk," Cohan Theatre



ELIZABETH VALENTINE IN "LORD DUNDERBARY."

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYS.

An event of considerable theatrical note this week will be the appearance of Margaret Anglin at the popular-priced Standard Theatre, presenting a modern comedy, "Beverly's Balance." The play was seen last season at the Lyceum.

Miss Anglin's supporting company will include Donald Cameron, Howard Lindsey, Alfred Lund, Saxone Morland and Mrs. Charles G. Craig.

"Young America," a delightful play about boys and a dog, will be the week's bill at the Bronx Opera House. The original Gaiety Theatre cast will be seen. In addition to the regular matinees there will be an extra performance on the afternoon of December 31.

New Films and Old Seen On the Screens This Week

"Don Quixote" has been found good enough for a second week at the Knickerbocker. It is the first film in which the gigantic Da Wolf Hooper ever has appeared, and as such has a drawing power independent of the popularity of Cervantes's story.

"The Conqueror" will show Willard Mack in the role of a poor boy who rises to prominence in Wall Street and earns the name of the "wolf of finance." In return for a snub from a social leader he all but ruins the latter in the street. Enter the love interest, and, says the announcement, "Ince ends the film in an unusual manner, which leaves no doubt as to the future of the couple."

Chester Conklin, in "Dizzy Heights and Daring Hearts," a Keystone comedy, is said to furnish thrills and more thrills. A monoplane and a biplane figure in the action, and the play ends with the blowing up of a 200-foot chimney, burying the comedy villain under the bricks.

For the benefit of those who saw "Don Quixote" last week, it might be added that that film will be run off first on the next programme.

A dramatic Fox film, "Destruction," with the underpinning of labor as its theme, will be shown to-day and for three days to follow at the Academy of Music, and to-day only at the River-side. Theda Bara has the leading role, that of a woman whose love of luxury ruins her husband and plunges workers into poverty. Follow strikes and riots, and the woman is forced to flee. Then things really begin to happen.

As Ferdinand, Miss Bara is said to have opportunities to exhibit anew

her powers as a vampire, and to give a remarkable impersonation of a cold, calculating woman. The play was written by Nixola Daniels, and produced under the direction of W. S. Davis.

"The Old Homestead," probably the greatest rural drama ever written, and in which the late Denman Thompson starred for over thirty years, will be shown this week at the Broadway. Through the cooperation of Frank Thompson, son of the author-actor, the producers have been able to preserve to a remarkable degree the spirit of the play. The scenes were taken at the old Thompson homestead, in New Hampshire, and even the interior of the house was made up of Frank Thompson's own collection.

Pauline Frederick will be seen at the Strand this week in a photo dramatization of "Lydia Gilmore," Henry Arthur Jones's play. In "Lydia Gilmore" Miss Frederick will be seen in a role different from any of her previous screen parts—that of a wife and mother who goes through mental tortures to save her boy from disgrace, at the hands of her father. Miss Frederick is supported by Vincent Serrano, Thomas Holding, Robert Cain, Helen Luttrell, Jack Curtis and Michael Rale.

One by one the war films are fading away. "Germany on the Firing Line" remains at the Park Theatre, however, and is worth a trip to Columbus Circle. It is the real thing.

Oblivious to the fact that it already holds the longevity record, "The Birth of a Nation" goes right ahead at the Liberty. It will move out in another week.

BROOKLYN THEATRES.

Directly from its lengthy run at the Harris, "Rolling Stones" goes this week to Brooklyn and the Montauk. "Rolling Stones" is an active comedy by Edgar Selwyn, wherein are traced the careers of two youths who start out to collect the living that they believe the world owes them.

"Two Is Company," following its opening performance last night at the Majestic, will be continued throughout the coming week. Edward A. Paulson, co-author of the play, is one of the cast.

The vaudeville bill at the Prospect will include Gertrude Vanderbilt and George Moore, with songs; George's Animated Toyshop, Mrs. Gene Hughes in "Youth"; Minnie Allen, comedienne; Donahue and Stewart, in "Him and Her"; Arnaut Brothers, clowns; Belle-claire Brothers, athletes; Alderman Francis P. Bont, in a lecture; Corbett, Shepard and Donovan, who sing; Charles Olcott, with a travesty on comic opera; the Victoria Four, in an athletic novelty, and Robbie Gordone and company.

Phyllis Neilson-Terry will be headlined at the Orpheum, and will be supported by Harry Green, in "The Cherry Tree"; Norton and Lee, with songs and dances; Kathleen Clifford, Harry Gilfoil, the "old sport"; Henriette de Serris and company of models, Emerson and Baldwin, juggling comedians; Lambert and Fredericks and the Seabacks.

Alexander Carr will head the Bush, which will bill in "An Actor's Showers." Others will be Harry Girard and company, in "The Luck of a Totem"; Santley and Norton, with songs; Deliro, accordion player; Adelaide Herrmann, Warren P. Bont, in a lecture; Corbett, Shepard and Donovan, who sing; Charles Olcott, with a travesty on comic opera; the Victoria Four, in an athletic novelty, and Robbie Gordone and company.

M. B. Leavitt Testimonial.

The testimonial to M. B. Leavitt, the veteran manager, which will occur at the Manhattan Opera House on the afternoon of January 11, is being given in larger and larger proportions as the time draws near. Some of those who will appear will be Willis P. Sweetnam, James J. Powers, the French Players, the Washington Square Players, Edna May, George W. Lederer, Wilton Lackaye, Buffalo Bill, Victor Herbert, Nat Goodwin, Trilix Frigman, Lou Tellegen, Maggie Clive, Burr McIntosh, Kitty Gordon, Fred Niblo, Harry Houdini, Julius Wittmark, Muzi Hajos, King Baggot, Grace La Rue, James J. Corbett and numerous others.

Irving Place Theatre.

"Der Weg zur Heile," a new farce by Franz Kadelburg, will be produced at the German Irving Place Theatre Friday night. All of the principal members of the German Stock Company will be in the cast. During the week there will be daily special matinees of "Hansel und Gretel," the fairy play. Emmy Nicklass, Ith Engel and Christian Rub are in the cast.

Where and Why Plays of the Season Continue

"Peter Pan" Returns with All the Ingenious and Whimsical Things Which Have Made It a Play of Great Appeal to All Ages.

By HEYWOOD BROWN.

Plays of Last Week.
"Peter Pan," at the Empire, is an excellent revival of Barrie's whimsical and ingenious play, which pleases children just about as much as it does grownups. Maude Adams is as potent in charm as ever. The play, as everybody knows, is about a boy who never grew up, a crocodile who swallowed a clock, a pirate with a hook for a hand, Indians, lions, wolves and ever so many things which make for interest.

"Very Good Eddie," at the Princess, is an agreeable musical show of no great pretensions, which is played with rare good humor and charm by an excellent company. Ernest Truex and Anna Orr are conspicuous in the cast.

"Katinka," a musical play at the Forty-fourth Street Theatre. Comment later.

"Stop! Look! Listen!" a musical comedy at the Globe Theatre. Comment later.

"Ruggles of Red Gap," a farce at the Fulton Theatre. Comment later.

Comedies.

"The Great Lover," at the Longacre, is an amusing, exciting and smartly sentimental play about folk in the opera house. It may or may not be true to life, but it is eloquently true to the drama, and nobody will doubt a word of it as long as he is in the theatre. Certainly nobody will doubt the fidelity of any of the many ingenious strokes which go to make Jean Patour just about the most interesting figure ever created by Leo Ditrichstein.

"The Unchastened Woman," at the Thirtieth Street Theatre, gives Emily Stevens a remarkably fine opportunity for effective acting in a part which is theatrically effective and yet novel. The play has marked dramatic power and is well acted. It concerns a woman who has grit enough to remain malicious even in the face of difficulties.

"Major Barbara," at the Playhouse, is a clever performance of an interesting play by Shaw. We don't think the play is in a class with "Caesar and Cleopatra," "Candida" or "Arms and the Man," but it is one of Shaw's effective plays, just the same, and it is played with skill and intelligence by an excellent company. Grace George, Louis Calvert and Conway Tearle all contribute greatly to the success of a clever entertainment. By the way, there is no particular use in seeing "Major Barbara" unless you have a sense of humor, or at least a feeling for brilliant dialogue.

"The Boomerang," at the Belasco, is a slight but ever so bright comedy about a doctor who tried to cure a young man of love and himself fell victim of that malady. It is acted with a quiet skill and precision which make it one of the most delightful entertainments of the year. Martha Hedman, Arthur B. Woods and Wallace Eddinger are in the noteworthy cast.

"Hobson's Choice," at the Comedy, is a broad, true and amusing study of life in Lancashire. It is excellently acted throughout. In fact, no play in the city can boast of a cast so nicely balanced.

"Abe and Mawruss," at the Lyric, is a continuation of the adventures of the well-known creations of Montague Glass. The play is at its best first class comedy of character and at its worst pretty good melodrama. Barney Noble as Abe Potash does remarkably well.

"Our Mrs. McChesney," at the Lyceum, is a loosely built play about the well-known character which Edna Ferber has contributed to fiction. In spite of its exceeding diffuse quality the play has much humor and flashes of sentiment. Then, too, it has the ever popular Ethel Barrymore.

"The Weavers," at the Garden Theatre, is the most remarkable production of the season. Hauptmann's famous play possesses fresh dramatic interest of extraordinary intensity, and the performance organized by Emmanuel Reicher is a masterpiece.

Tragedy.

"The Blue Paradise," at the Casino, is a loosely built play about the more excellent in book than in music, but, whatever the ingredients, the combination is distinctly pleasing.

"The Midnight Frolic," on the road of the New Amsterdam Theatre is agreeable, frothy entertainment of the kind required after theatre time.

A SCENE FROM "SADIE LOVE."



Miss Betty Callish and Pedro de Cordoba in the farce at the Gaiety.